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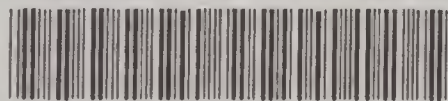
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ORATION

BY

ROBERT Y. CONRAD, Esq.

PRONOUNCED IN THE KENT-STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WINCHESTER,

JULY 4, 1827.

ORATION

BY

DAVID W. BARTON, Esq.

PRONOUNCED IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH, NEWTOWN-STEPHENSBURG,

JULY 4, 1827.

WINCHESTER, JULY 5, 1827.

Sir: The committee of arrangement return their thanks to you for your excellent oration, delivered on the 4th inst., and respectfully request a copy of it for publication.

JOSIAH W. WARE,
JAMES BELL,
N. L. GORDON,
SOLOMON P. SPENGLER,
EBIN MILTON.

Robert Y. Conrad, Esq.

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 1827.

Gentlemen: I have received your communication of to-day, requesting a copy of the address which I had the honor of making yesterday, for publication.

Even the partiality of authorship cannot make me think that it merits this flattering notice. The first attempt at this kind of composition by one habitually engaged in very dry and very different studies, cannot be worth preserving.

A sense of obligation for the kind manner in which I was sustained by my friends in the novel situation in which their partiality placed me on yesterday, impels me to conform to their wishes at any sacrifice. A copy of the address is therefore committed to you gentlemen, to use as you please.

For your kindly expressed note accept my thanks.

I am very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT Y. CONRAD.

Josiah W. Ware, James Bell, N. L. Gordon, S. P. Spengler, Ebin Milton.

[Mr. Barton was applied to verbally by the committee, for a copy of his oration, to whom it was immediately handed.]

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1827

Already has the effects of our revolution extended far beyond the limits of our territory. South America has burst her fetters, and stands regenerated and disenthralled. The chain of colonial subjection which fifty years ago bound the new world to the old, has scarcely a link left unbroken. In that short period we have become independent of Europe and her political principles,—have adopted for ourselves new principles and new institutions,—and present to the world a continent of freemen, ardently devoted to the cause of liberty, and offering up to heaven daily orisons for its success. South America has achieved her independence from foreign domination; her patriot sons have deported themselves nobly in her war of independence. Her chieftains have supplied by heroic valour what they wanted in discipline and experience. She has one whom some

have even ventured to assimilate to our Father, Washington. God grant that this proud comparison may preserve him steady in his path! May he gaze upon the moral sublimity of our Washington with a constant eye of emulation, and scorning, like him, to be the "fool of false dominion," and spurning from his brow the dictatorial wreath, deserve and receive a monument in his country's memory, upon which Time will break his scythe. Let us hope that South America may be blessed, as we were, with statesmen suited to this important crisis of her political life,—skilful and prudent pilots who may steer her vessel of state safely into the port of republicanism.

But in Europe also the genius of political reformation is at work. The day-spring is breaking from the verdant shores of the Mediterranean, to the ice-bound coasts of the Northern Ocean. Liberal principles are gaining ground in the policy and councils of every civilized nation; even where the form and theory of the government is despotic, its rulers are compelled to govern with an attentive regard to the enlightened force of public sentiment.

England, whose institutions have been always free in comparison with those of the other nations of the old world, has recently given evidence of a favourable change in her domestic policy. Her proud and narrow-minded aristocracy has been compelled to crouch before the frown of public opinion,—to yield the helm of her government to one undistinguished by empty title or noble birth—recommended alone by the power of his genius and the liberality of his principles—one of Nature's nobility. A commoner, obscure in his origin, though brilliantly conspicuous in his public career, rules the destinies of Great Britain; and a petty ebullition of passion was all that could mark the displeasure of those who claimed the station by hereditary right.

With anxiety have we watched the efforts of Greece in her struggle for independence. Greece! endeared to us by every classic association; the mother of arts,—the cradle of science,—the sparkling fountain of polite literature,—the land of Lycurgus and Leonidas, of Homer and Demosthenes. The burning eloquence of her orators—the energy and pathos of her poets—the breathing forms and unrivalled architecture of her artists,—have been for ages the admiration of the world. Her language has ever been the handmaiden of civilization: its flowing periods and beautiful structure have made it the study of youth and the recreation of manhood. That land, once of every land the pride, has been for centuries the degraded conquest of the Turk; the descendants of her heroes have been the bondsmen of the infidel.

"Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be
That this is all remains of thee?"

Who is here so selfish as to deny to Greece his warmest prayer for her success? What American can be found who desires not to see her ancient commonwealth restored,—to see her sharing with himself the sweets of liberty? Not alone in prayers and professions has this sympathy been shewn. Many of our chivalric youth have for her sake and for the cause of liberty, severed the ties of kindred and of country,—have left their homes, the delights, the loves, the language of their own native land, to encounter hardship, toil and danger,—to lay their ashes in a foreign soil.

Her success is sure. Her sons have aroused from their lethargy,

"Snatched from the ashes of their sires,
The embers of their former fires,"

and given a Promethean touch to the inanimate beauty of her features. Fighting over the graves of their fathers, the monuments of ancient victories, they *will* give to Freedom a home, or to Glory a grave. They may struggle on through fields of death and years of difficulty; generations may smite the dust, but new ones will arise animated with new ardour by the voice of blood, and ultimately they must succeed:

"For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won."

The prosperous condition of our happy country next claims our consideration. When we survey the nations of the earth, we see some still enveloped in darkness—some just struggling into light,—while we are basking in the broad glare of political prosperity—reposing safely and luxuriously under the tree of liberty which was planted by the toil

of our fathers. Favoured by heaven and envied by earth, our country presents an aggregate of happiness among her citizens, heretofore unknown to the world.

In the moment of exultation let us not forget, my countrymen, to whom we owe this proud distinction. Next to the just and beneficent Great Spirit of the universe,—to whom be all honor, and glory, and gratitude,—we owe it to those extraordinary men whom God raised up for our emergency,—men whom we are proud to call our Fathers. Let us not, then, be unmindful of our debt—the annual tribute of grateful remembrance.

If the disembodied spirit is united to this world by one single chord of sympathy, this day the hearts of our departed heroes vibrate in unison with ours; the loud voice of their country's gratitude reaches them even amid the music of the spheres, and gives an added charm to the melody. The bright light upon Freedom's altar, around which their sons are rejoicing, adds a hue to the rainbow joys of heaven. They look down upon us with the approving smile of paternal affection. Fancy's eye may see the group—mortal pencil could not depict it. Mark the noble presence of Patrick Henry, who more than half a century ago, exhorted his countrymen to begin the great work of erecting a temple to liberty; the "forest-born Demosthenes," who hurled the thunderbolts of his eloquence at the battlements of tyranny, till not one stone upon another remained to disgrace his native soil. And there "the stoic Franklin's energetic shade,"—he who snatched the lightnings from heaven, and the sceptre from the tyrant,—who shed upon the world the mingled light of liberty and science. Near him stand two venerable men, who but lately left us to join their compatriots. On the last—the fiftieth anniversary of this day—the great jubilee—when the trumpet of rejoicing rung with its loudest notes—when the altar blazed with its brightest flame, and the delighted nation was breathing its incense, they took their triumphant flight together; majestically rising on wings of immortality, were borne to the abodes of the favourites of heaven and the benefactors of mankind. A bright host of others are there, whose names gratitude has engraven upon our memories in traces which time can never obliterate. But who is that godlike shade in the midst of them, whom they seem to gather around with filial affection? His eye is beaming with the most ardent benevolence; his noble features are illuminated with the smile of a seraph; with outstretched arms he pronounces a blessing upon his country, and a prayer for her enduring prosperity.

They have left us, my countrymen, but they live in our memories. They are gone; but like the bright star which decks the azure brow of night, they fell streaming with a blaze of glory.

"Hail! all hail, the patriot's grave!
Valour's venerable bed!

Hail! the memory of the brave,
And the spirits of the dead!"

"Time their triumphs shall proclaim,
And their rich reward be this—

Immortality of fame!
Immortality of bliss!"

There is a time for rejoicing, and that time is the present. The eye of history must be blind—the tongue of tradition silent, when we cease to celebrate the 4th of July with joyful acclamation.

Venerable men—soldiers of the revolution! You have witnessed the birth of your country's liberty,—have seen it contending, like the infant Hercules, with the serpent emissaries of its malignant step-mother, and strangle the reptiles in its cradle,—have watched its steps through lovely infancy and blooming youth: need the voice of one who, with his cotemporaries, venerates your grey hairs and envies your lot, bid you rejoice at its prosperous and vigorous manhood?

Citizen soldiers! This day you have unfurled the banner of your country to the winds of heaven. The "spirit-stirring" music of your fife and drum has called us out to the jubilee. You are arrayed in the garb of soldiers, and celebrate this day with appropriate martial pomp. All this cannot be the heartless parade of ostentation. These associations strike the chords of our noblest feelings, and vibrate every sympathy of our souls. We resolve, fellow-soldiers, in our hearts, that that banner shall continue to wave over us as freemen, or shroud us as dead. Remember that this banner floated over the hard fought fields of the revolution. That eagle was then scarcely fledged: nestled in the wilds of America, the noble nature of the bird was unknown: but, nourished by

the hands of heroes, he grew in proud superiority; he rose and hovers over his native mountains, the terror of foes—the protection of friends—the admiration of all:

“Broad to the sun his kindling breast he turns,
Till all his plumage in the radiance burns:
His boundless vision beams from pole to pole,
Where empires flourish, and where oceans roll.”

Matrons and Maidens! It becomes you also to rejoice. While in a large portion of the world lovely woman is the slave of a slave, here, in this land of Heaven’s peculiar grace, it is her happy lot to be the friend, the companion of freemen. Her sons are not born to be the playthings of a despot, but tread their wild mountains and luxuriant plains in all the pride of freedom; nursed in the devotion of liberty, which their fathers fought for and bequeathed—a “noble heritage of heart and hand.” Woman contributed much to erect this temple of liberty, and she stands the Corinthian pillar of the edifice,—at once its firmest support and most beautiful ornament. Our mothers nerved the arm and fired the ardour of the revolutionary hero. They gave up all in the hour of their country’s need. The wife with heroic fortitude girded the sword upon her husband and bade him to the battle, while she remained at home in voluntary widowhood, praying for success. The holy light of the maiden’s love, the fervent flame of maternal affection, were all merged in the universal blaze of patriotism. Rejoice, then, ye fair, or tenfold have you been rewarded for this heroism of your sex.

“Here woman reigns: the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow way of life;
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye,
An angel guard of loves and graces lie;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fire-side pleasures gambol at her feet.”

MR. BARTON’S ORATION.

In obedience to established usage and to the suggestions of our own feelings, we have assembled, fellow-citizens, to celebrate an important national event, and to observe its anniversary with some suitable manifestations of respect. With one accord, and with united hearts, we have come up to this sacred place, to offer the incense of thanksgiving and praise to that Being “who presides over the destiny of nations,”—to render some just tribute of homage to the memory of our fathers, the honored instruments of our emancipation,—to rekindle the flame of patriotic devotion at this living altar, and to mingle our congratulations and rejoicings over the happy condition and the cheering prospects of our common country. *We have abundant reason to rejoice*, for “we are crowned with innumerable benefits, and our cup runs over with blessings.” *We have cause to be thankful*, for “the God of our fathers,” who laid bare his arm of power and stretched forth his hand of deliverance in the day of their necessity, has vouchsafed to us his continued protection, and is now visible in the countless mercies dispensed with such liberal profusion over this chosen land. On this day, too, when the national harp is attuned to notes of triumph, and the songs of mirth and gladness are heard throughout our borders,—when Plenty is pouring from her exhaustless horn the abundant pro-

ducts of agricultural skill and commercial enterprise, and we are permitted to set fearless and unmolested under the thick covert of wise and beneficent laws,—it becomes us to remember with peculiar gratitude the venerable Fathers of our republic,—those men of other times, whose consummate wisdom and unexampled virtues purchased these blessings for us, and rendered this a day “of joy and not of sorrow.” Here, too, may the patriot come to renew the covenant of his allegiance, and to animate the ardour of his love; for that star-spangled banner,—these symbols of rejoicing,—this unusual assemblage, and this general suspension of the common employments of life,—are *commemorative of his country’s birth*.

On this day, fifty-one years since, the existence of these United States in the new attitude of a free and independent nation, was first proclaimed to their exulting subjects. It was a glorious and a triumphant annunciation! To the *world* this day was born a *new people*, who, springing at once with matchless growth and unprecedented rapidity, from helpless infancy to vigorous manhood, have already assumed their high and equal rank in the great family of nations! To the western continent this day was born a *new dominion*, which, rising in the majesty of its own inherent strength, and with the resistless energy of truth and reason, has disclaimed the divine prerogative of sceptred lords, and cast off the ignominious chains of European vassalage. To the politician this day was born a *new sovereignty*; a sovereignty of which no visionary theorist or Utopian dreamer ever conceived,—the original, absolute and inextinguishable sovereignty of the people. To the philanthropist this day has been erected a spacious temple, to whose extended courts and open sanctuary the persecuted and oppressed of human kind may fly for refuge and security. To us this day was born a government of laws,—a government of freedom and equality,—a government contrived with such singular felicity, that every citizen is at the same instant the governed and the governor, the subject and the sovereign,—a government which has its deep foundations laid on the unchangeable principles of human nature, and is built up with the imperishable materials of reason and right. Well may we rejoice at this glorious birth! Well may we be grateful to the Giver of all good for this surpassing proof of his munificence! Well may the erection of this new and admirable dynasty be, as it will ever be, the theme of ceaseless celebration to its happy subjects, and this memorable day

“Be honored still in distant lands,
And hallowed here at home.”

If the lights of history and tradition could be suddenly extinguished; if the simple annals of our colonial existence, as well as the more dignified details of our national affairs, could be for a moment forgotten; if the origin of our conflict with the mother country, and the various incidents of our revolutionary struggle could be obliterated from the records of time, and no living witness were left of all that band of patriots who saw and shared the perils and the trials of that eventful period,—the rise, progress and past duration of this empire would be subjects of curious conjecture and deeply interesting speculation. Were we to regard merely the actual condition of the United States at this moment—to consider the number of their population—the extent of their financial resources—their agricultural wealth and commercial enterprise—their advancement in science and proficiency in the arts,—we might conclude with great apparent reason, that *time* only could have perfected so wonderful a work, and that this magnificent structure of liberty, with its various and beautiful appendages, must have been the slow result of the united genius and conspiring energies of successive generations of men. In surveying our public and social institutions, and all the multiplied monuments of our national greatness, well may imagination pass over the weak endeavours and the poor promise of “these degenerate days,” and travel back to ages of remote antiquity to find the origin of this venerable people! With what profound research and keen sagacity might not the political philosopher, in contemplating the solid fabric of this *secure* dominion, attempt to pierce the veil of years, and to search for the “seeds of empire” in some long-forgotten age. With what patriotic enthusiasm and poetic rapture might not some child of fancy, while surveying the large dimensions, and the full and perfect maturity of our social system, attempt to conjure up some bright vision of our patriarchal days, and to portray in glowing colors the imaginary incidents of our fabulous history.

But with us there is no need of idle speculation or of vain imagining. No vague tradition or uncertain history recounts the story of our birth. No musty or time-worn chro-

nicle contains the registry of our origin. No veil of long-drawn years is interposed between us and the full knowledge of our earliest existence. The sublime and interesting truths of our political creation are revealed in all the brightness of absolute certainty: they shine on the fresh page of recent history: they are blazoned forth in ten thousand public memorials, and in the still remaining trophies of victory: they were taught to us in childhood as a lesson of sacred and unquestionable truth: they are engraven on our hearts in indelible characters by the hands of our fathers: they are preserved as a precious treasure in the memory of *these* living men who were *actors* in the fearful tragedy. The mighty work which no unaided human intelligence could have projected, and nothing short of prophetic inspiration have presaged, has been *accomplished* by our immediate ancestors, within the brief period of half a century. This sovereign people who are already robed in the vesture of age, and exult in the sinewy strength and the full stature of the perfect man, are still *in their very pupillage*. This anomalous government, which controls with such mild and salutary sway, the destinies of this immense population,—these solid civil institutions which promise to survive the wreck of many a splendid monarchy,—these trophies of genius and of taste which grace and ennoble our national character,—and these monuments of art which enrich and decorate the land,—are all the works of *infant artificers*. Wonderful indeed, above all earthly wonders, has been the rapidity of our march, and estimable indeed, above all common price, the glory of the conquest we have achieved.

That an unknown and unexplored wilderness whose very existence had been but recently disclosed, situated in a *new world*,—at an almost immeasurable distance from the seats of intelligence and the abodes of *civilization*,—with a wide expanse of trackless ocean intervening,—should, in the comparatively short period of little more than two centuries, teem through its widest limits with the abundant fruits of well-directed industry—should be divested of its impassable thickets and impenetrable forests—should be checkered with towns, and villages and farms, and should rejoice in the rich verdure and the varied beauties of skilful cultivation—should be cleansed of its moral and religious impurities, and illumined with the genial light of the christian dispensation—should be inhabited by twelve millions of rational and enlightened people—and that that people should be exalted to the highest eminence of national felicity,—are authentic truths which may reasonably fill our minds with admiration and astonishment.

Let us turn, then, for a moment, to the unpolished pages of our early annals, and see through what severe trials, and disheartening crosses, and disastrous accidents, this “march of mind” has been conducted, and this nation advanced to its present condition of unequalled prosperity. Prior to the year 1607, the sacred soil of the “Ancient Dominion” had never been trodden by the foot of civilized man,—unless, indeed, some luckless mariner roving in these western seas, may have been wrecked, and have perished with his discoveries upon its inhospitable shores. The existence of a new continent had indeed been disclosed for more than a century before, and the curiosity of science and the enterprise of commerce had often essayed to cross the untravelled deep, to explore the hidden treasures of these extensive regions. Spain, France, England, Portugal, and all the other maritime states of Europe, had successively sent forth their bands of avaricious or romantic adventurers to accumulate wealth, or to gather laurels in these distant wilds. About the close of the fifteenth century this hemisphere was first visited by Christopher Columbus. In the year 1496 an enterprising merchant of Bristol was commissioned by Henry VII. the reigning monarch of England, to sail westward in search of some direct communication with the East India islands. Reaching the American continent towards its northern extremity, he steered along the Atlantic coast until he arrived in the latitude, and possibly within sight of Virginia, when disappointed in finding the expected avenue to the Pacific ocean, he abandoned the expedition and returned to Europe.

At that day the permanent colonization of this country seems not to have been seriously contemplated by its European proprietors; nor in truth was the prospect of success sufficiently flattering to induce or to justify the experiment. That a colony could be planted here in the desert, at an infinite distance from the parent stalk, and, without the constant application of some fostering hand, and the expenditure of large sums of money in its support, could flourish to such an extent as by a reciprocal commerce and an interchange of products, to augment the revenue and enhance the political importance of

the mother country, was a contingency apparently as remote as it was obviously uncertain. No other immediate benefit was expected to accrue to Europe from the labours of Columbus than the discovery of some shorter and safer channel than that in which she had been accustomed to conduct her Asiatic trade. The frustration of that hope, and the occurrence of some untoward political events about the same time, conspired to abate the spirit of adventure, and to retard the further progress of discovery. For a long lapse of tedious years no new attempt was made to dispel the darkness or disturb the death-like repose of this vast solitude. That glorious destiny which we are now fulfilling had not yet been pronounced! This boundless region still continued as it came from the hands of its Creator, unaltered in its moral or physical condition! Nature was suffered still to wield her sceptre over an undisputed dominion. No sound of axe, or ploughman's song, or noise of busy art, then broke upon the stillness of this wide-spread wilderness. The savage roamed with vagrant feet and reckless indifference over an interminable waste, and a thick cloud of spiritual darkness shrouded the land! But the day of regeneration was not far distant! A light which shone in the east, and a "still, small voice" heard across the waters, announced the advent of social man, and the rising of the sun of moral and intellectual refinement. That sun was rising in its fullest splendour—destined to diffuse its salutary warmth through the cold recesses of the heathen world, where no ray of moral heat had ever yet been felt,—destined to shine into the dark abodes of human ignorance, where no beam of intellectual light had ever penetrated,—destined to animate the wilds and to people the solitary places of the desert, which no eye of civilized man had ever seen,—destined to shine on with increasing splendour, until under its beneficent influence a new nation should rise up to avenge the violated rights of man, and to illustrate the blessings of a free government and of liberal laws! That high destiny has been fulfilled! Its accomplishment may be read in the recorded history of this flourishing empire.

I might here detain you with a tedious detail of the perilous adventures, the incredible sufferings, and the unexampled privations of the first colonists at Jamestown. I might rehearse to you a long narrative of Indian wars, and sanguinary battles, and treacherous surprises, and inhuman massacres. I might recount to you, from the records of that day, many a tale of female heroism—many a feat of virtuous chivalry and romantic valour—and many an example of imminent hazard and miraculous escape. And above all, I might copy from some shining page an interesting portraiture of the stern and quiet resignation of the captive Smith, and the beaming benevolence and timely interposition of his angel deliverer.

But these, though subjects of deep interest to the American reader, are themes upon which it would be impertinent to the occasion which convenes us, now to dwell. The day we celebrate is consecrated to more important recollections. A wider field of history is spread before us, upon whose extended surface, while on the one hand may be seen no less "frightful forms" of human suffering, and of sore privation, and of base treachery, and of sanguinary strife,—on the other shine no fewer images of gallant bearing and heroic intrepidity,—no fewer "deeds of high emprise,"—and a no less providential deliverance from impending ruin.

Let us open, then, the ample volume of our revolutionary history, and hastily review the origin and issue of that tremendous conflict, to whose successful termination, as a people, we owe all that is grateful to our memories in the recollection of the past, all that is dear to our hearts in the enjoyment of the present, and all that is bright and cheering to our hopes in the promises of the future.

The position of our affairs in the year 1776—the nature and extent of our connexion with Great Britain—the dark picture of her unnatural usurpations—and the long catalogue of wrongs which finally impelled the colonies to a convulsive severance of kindred ties,—are presented in bold relief and strong lineaments on the face of that eloquent manifesto which has just been read to you. The American revolution has been unjustly imputed to some sudden and capricious ebullition of popular frenzy—to a restless love of innovation—and to a sensitive pride and a refractory spirit engendered by the consciousness of our growing population and increasing prosperity. And if the actual facts of that transaction had never been developed, and we were constrained to walk on mere speculative ground, we might be willing to concede that this was at least a very *plausible* theory. That an enlightened people, nurtured in the very school of liberty, and im-

bued with an almost instinctive devotion to free government—inhabiting this remote and secluded extremity of the world—possessed within themselves of all the appliances of comfortable life, and all the means of national prosperity—with sufficient vigour to resist the utmost efforts of domestic foes—and sequestered by space and ocean from the unholy strife of commercial avarice and imperial ambition;—that a people thus self-possessed, self-dependant, self-sufficient, should fondly aspire to some higher destiny than colonial vassalage—and should become restive and impatient of the hand of foreign domination, however lightly imposed,—is by no means an extraordinary supposition. But are there not other causes to which our difference with England may be fairly attributed? Is all that we have seen and heard of British tyranny a mere fanciful picture or legendary tale? Is there no truth in unimpeached history? Is there no truth in the public records and the private documents of that day, fraught as they are with attestations of parental cruelty, and stained as they are with the horrors of unnatural war? Is no faith due to the concurrent testimony of these veteran patriots who have survived the shock of the revolution, and who now stand here to bear witness against the *demon of the tempest*? Is there no truth in the deep-toned and indignant declarations of this instrument, in support of whose statements, as well as in maintenance of its principles, that “precious corps of worthies,” selected from the virtue, and wisdom, and chivalry of the land, “mutually pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor?”

To review the protracted enumeration of wrongs detailed in this venerable paper, and to comment at length upon the several specific charges of usurpation preferred against the mother country, would be an unwarrantable occupation of your time. But we will briefly advert to that *little* act of British injustice which first infringed the chartered rights of the colonies, and which seems to have been designed by the insidious usurper as the “*entering wedge*” which was gradually to open the way for the introduction of larger and more *rending* instruments of vexation and tyranny. The imposition of taxes by a trans-atlantic legislature, in which the colonies had no voice or representation, was among the earliest indications of that pernicious policy which had “in direct object the establishment of absolute dominion over these states.” The parliament of Great Britain—composed exclusively of domestic subjects—convened in the distant metropolis of England—ignorant of the wants, the interests and the pecuniary exigencies of the colonies,—undertook, nevertheless, in the plenitude of their own “absolute discretion and unbounded authority,” to exact from the purses of our people a yearly, monthly, weekly, nay daily contribution to their own *peculiar pockets*;—to coerce us, by the dread sanctions of a solemn act of British legislation, to aid in plenishing a revenue, which, instead of being returned to us in the compensatory shape of public benefactions or useful improvements within our borders, was to be employed in the extinguishment of some *English* debt—in the conduct of some unrighteous war at home—or for aught we knew, in the construction of new instruments of outrage, or the forging of other chains to bind us down to a more penal servitude and a still more vile humiliation. We might justify our resistance to this iniquitous encroachment by an appeal to the cardinal rights of human nature; we might indulge ourselves in an abstract disquisition on the true theory of government; we might cite with fearless confidence, that axiom of social liberty which lays the foundation of all legitimate government in the consent of the governed; or we might rely upon the intrinsic justice and essential reasonableness of the doctrine which on the one hand confines the *power of imposing taxes* to those who bear their portion of the burthen, and on the other, *restricts the liability to taxation* to those who have some share of control over the expenditure of the money when collected. But we are not content that our justification shall rest upon abstract principles of natural right or of social right. We hold ourselves justified as the liege subjects of an existing and an acknowledged authority—as the firm and inflexible advocates of British liberty—as the faithful sentinels and dutiful subjects of the British constitution,—bound in these relations to preserve it inviolate. In the common case, the emigration of a people from their native land, and their establishment elsewhere *as a colony*, leaves them subject to the same laws, and in possession of all the franchises and immunities which appertained to them in the mother country: and the exceptions to this reasonable rule occur in cases where the colonists have voluntarily abandoned some portion of their rights, by an express and positive release, or by the acceptance of some charter, patent, or act of incor-

poration, to which some abridgment of right is distinctly annexed as a condition. Our ancestors insisted that in relation to the American colonies, not only had there never been any express release or implied abandonment of right, but that on the contrary, in all the royal proclamations and letters patent by which the territory of this continent was distributed among the early adventurers, there were guaranteed to them, their successors and descendants, all privileges, liberties and immunities which belonged to the subject born and abiding within the realm of England. "By the constitution of England the security of the people from oppressive taxation is guarded by the most studious precautions." In what do these precautions consist? In this: "That every law which by the remotest construction may be deemed to levy money of the property of the subject, must originate in, and be assented to by, the *house of commons*,"—that being the popular branch of the legislature, and composed of the immediate representatives of the people. An eminent eulogist, in commenting on this feature of the British constitution, observes with great justice and with undeniable truth, "That the representatives are so blended and intermixed with their constituents, that they cannot, without a partiality too flagrant to be endured, impose any burthen upon the subject in which they do not share themselves, nor can they adopt any salutary regulation in which their own interests do not participate of the advantage." The same writer elsewhere (in allusion to England) remarks, with great apparent complacency, that "every district in the empire enjoys the privilege of choosing representatives informed of the interests, circumstances and desires of their constituents, and entitled by their office to communicate information to the national council: so that the meanest subject has some one on whom he can call, to bring forward his complaints and requests to public attention." Now, if our "*gracious lords and masters*," the commoners of England, could produce the credentials of their pretended authority—could convince us by argument or insinuation, that they were the *elect and chosen* representatives of the people of Virginia and the sister colonies—that they lived within our limits—intermixed with our population—were conversant with our circumstances—and were qualified to represent our wants and wishes to the "national council,"—we might almost agree to desert the whole field of controversy, and to acknowledge that in our case "taxation was no tyranny," and that resistance was treason.

But it was no mean avarice or paltry consideration of pecuniary loss which prompted our opposition to parental authority, and involved us in all the disastrous consequences of civil discord. The great communion of interest and the strong sympathy of feeling subsisting between Great Britain and her colonies, would not have been dissolved for "light and transient causes." The silken cords of consanguinity—the endearing ties of matrimonial connexion—and above all, "that filial band, which knits us to our native land," would not have been torn asunder to spare the payment of *any specified* amount of miserable dollars. But where was the limit to the unrighteous usurpation? What boundary can be fixed to arrogated power? What index can be set up in the *open sea* to direct the vessel of state on her voyage, when the great polar star of "human right" is no longer to be seen, and the chart and the compass of the constitution are abandoned? Our fathers knew that tyranny was an evil of gradual and progressive increase—that its career, though onward and steady, was often secret and invisible—that "like the wolf upon his walk," it sometimes steals forth in the darkness of midnight to desolate the fold while the shepherd is sleeping at his post. They had heard that the fetters of despotism were not cast *whole* from the furnace, but were made up of separate and repeated acts of usurpation; and they wisely deemed it easier to destroy, while their arms were free, the detached and scattered links, than it would be to *break the chain* when it should be finished and fastened around them.

But after all, where is the necessity of studied argument and laboured vindication? The merits of the controversy between Great Britain and her colonies have been long since amply discussed and irrevocably settled. "The facts have been submitted to a candid world." The issue has been fairly tried and impartially determined by the great tribunal of public opinion, and a verdict of unqualified condemnation has been pronounced against our proud oppressor. And now our triumph is complete! We have fought and conquered, and we have fought and conquered in a righteous cause. No rational doubt or scruple of conscience can arise, to interrupt the universal festivity of this day! No cry of treason can now be uttered, to disturb the full concert of rejoicing millions! The honor of this nation is established on a firm and impregnable basis! No clouded

spot or sinister device tarnishes the bright heraldry of her armorial bearings! "Liberty, Patriotism, Triumph," are blazoned on her shield, and every bar and every image is the emblem of some victorious deed, or more victorious suffering!

Nor are the benefits of our success restricted to the limits of our own land. Our fame has gone abroad, borne on the four winds of heaven. Even the partial historians of other climes, and the mercenary minions of foreign despotism, are constrained to admire the brilliancy of our national career, and to do reverence to the moral grandeur of our unrivalled institutions. Thousands and tens of thousands who have escaped from the land of captivity and from the house of bondage, are flocking to our shores, like pilgrims to the "city of their devotion," to pay their undissembled homage to the high supremacy of freedom. The chord of virtuous and patriotic feeling which our fathers struck, is now vibrating in the remotest bounds of the habitable globe! The golden lyre which they waked to melody, is now played by a host of other minstrels! The praises of our heroes and statesmen are chanted by innumerable foreign tongues! The tears of the unknown philanthropist are this day mingled with a nation's grief, over the fresh graves of her Jefferson and her Adams. The patriot of distant regions is at this moment pouring with rapture over the page which records the deeds of her Washington, and surveying with mingled veneration and delight, "the mild lustre of his morning," and the all-cloudless glory of his "risen day!"

Nor are the benefits confined to vain enthusiasm or empty adulation. Fired by our example, and emulous of our renown, the enslaved of other countries are rising with their yokes, and indignantly shaking their fetters. Greece, once "the land of story and of song," but for ages of darkness the chosen theatre of Turkish rapine and ferocity, has at length raised her devoted head from the dust, and is now wielding the "avenging rod of final retribution." I trust in God she will prevail! I trust that the fair heritage of her soil and of her fame, will revert to its rightful proprietors—that the genius of science will resume dominion in her consecrated groves—that the eloquence of Demosthenes will again animate her forum—that the plastic virtue of her chisel will be again employed in erecting new monuments to perpetuate new deeds of renown—and that some inspired bard will take down her long neglected harp from its willow, to celebrate the triumphs of her arms and the blessings of her emancipation!

Nor is this the limit of our influence. The spirit of freedom, excited and cherished by our fathers, has pervaded the whole American continent. Spain,—corrupt, debased, degenerate Spain,—has been rightfully despoiled of "the brightest jewels in her crown." State after state has thrown off the heavy burthen of her thralldom, and fallen into our ranks in glorious succession, to swell the strong phalanx of liberty, and to extend the long line of redeemed and regenerated nations! The bright example of our virtuous struggle and its successful consummation will go down as a rich inheritance to future times,

"And ages hence,
Will this, our goodly scene, be acted o'er,
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown!"



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